

Re Point V.

1. Reference is made to the following documents:

D1: EP 0 313 855 A (IBM) 3 May 1989 (1989-05-03)

D2: EP 0 740 989 A (BRIDGESTONE CORP) 6 November 1996 (1996-11-06)

D3: EP 1 135 540 B (SIEMENS AG) 26 September 2001 (2001-09-26)

D4: US 4 098 450 A (RESOR DAVID L *ET AL.*) 4 July 1978 (1978-07-04)

D5: FR 2 836 157 A (USINOR) 22 August 2003 (2003-08-22)

2. Novelty, PCT Article 33(2):

The closest prior art is disclosed by document (D1). Document D1 discloses a process for the plasma cleaning of a component in accordance with the preamble of claim 1. The subject matter of claim 1 differs from D1 by virtue of the features of the characterizing clause. The subject matter of claim 1 is therefore novel.

3. Inventive step, PCT Article 33(3):

The object is to provide a process which allows contaminants to be removed from a crack more quickly and more easily without adversely affecting other regions of the component.

This object is achieved by the features of the characterizing clause of claim 1.

This combination of features is not known from the prior art, either in terms of the individual features or in terms of the features as a whole, and consequently there is no suggestion which

would lead to the subject matter or claim 1 in the version submitted. This justifies the presence of inventive step.

4. Industrial applicability, PCT Article 33(4):

The subject matter of claim 1 relates to a process for the plasma cleaning of a component, which is industrially applicable.

5. Dependent claims:

The subject matter of claims 2 to 6 relates to refinements to the process for the plasma cleaning of a component. Therefore, these claims together with the independent claim satisfy all the requirements of the PCT.